

# **An Exploration of the Construct Validity of Self-Compassion**

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## **Statement of academic probity and professional practice:**

I certify that all material in this assignment / assessment which is not my own work has been identified and properly attributed. I have conducted the work in line with the BPS DCP Professional Practice Guidelines.

## **Abstract**

Self-compassion is receiving increasing interest from psychologists and researchers due to its potential role in wellbeing and mental health however, self-compassion as a unique construct has not been validated. This research utilised pilot studies in order to develop an operational definition of self-compassion, separate from other similar constructs. A multi-trait multi-method approach to construct validation was utilised to assess self-compassion's discriminant and convergent validity in relation to the constructs of self-esteem and compassion for others in a community sample of 307. Self-compassion was then evaluated for its role in mental health and wellbeing when assessed against the two comparison constructs. Results demonstrated discriminant validity to both comparison constructs but convergent validity only in regards to self-esteem, providing partial support for the construct validity of self-compassion. As hypothesised support was found for self-compassion as a unique predictor in regards to wellbeing, but its role could not be determined for mental health. The results are discussed in terms self-compassion's functional relationships with comparison constructs and therapeutic utility. Recommendations for the direction of future research are discussed.

*Keywords:* Self-compassion, construct validity, compassion, self-esteem, wellbeing, mental health.

*Highlights:* >An operational definition of self-compassion was developed and explored>A MTMM approach found partial support for construct validation>Results indicated a distinction between self-compassion and compassion for others>Self-compassion was found to have a significant unique association with wellbeing.

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